

Our Impact Our Community

Annual Report 2017-18

HRCLS provides free legal advice on a range of issues, including family law, family violence, youth law, credit and debt issues, and consumer complaints



Thanks to UMFC

We are auspiced by UMFC and appreciate their support and assistance to help us deliver the best possible service for our community.

organisational culture

Care for our Community

Working alongside our vulnerable clients empowers them to play a role in resolving their legal problems. We advocate for solutions and better ways to deliver outcomes for people in our communities.

Thanks to our Funders

We receive funding from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Victoria Legal Aid, Legal Aid NSW, Department of Justice and Regulation (Victoria) and the Victorian Legal Services Board Grants Program.

Share skills and knowledge

We educate our stakeholders to provide them with basic skills to identify legal problems their clients are experiencing. We welcome law students passionate about making a difference in the world, and are proud to help them begin their exciting and fulfilling journey.

Communicate with stakeholders

Our links with service providers are vital for us making a difference in people's lives. We share information, build trust and seek their wisdom to guide how we can deliver the best results for people in need of significant help.

Responsive and innovative

We explore new approaches to help us improve our legal service delivery. Our services are evidencebased and targeted to community need, and we constantly evaluate our programs to measure success.

Resourceful and flexible

Smart use of funds delivers the best outcomes for our community and the best results for our funders. We can act quickly and efficiently to meet needs and solve problems.

Staff and volunteers

We are committed to providing the best environment for our greatest assets to thrive and produce their best possible work. Training and professional development builds knowledge, support and care builds a strong team.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service



UMFC Board

President Greg Pearl Vice President Robyn Gillis Treasurer Dean Bocquet Member Paul Robb Member Liz Heta Member Sunita Rama Member Anita Smith Member Thomas Crumpton CEO & Secretary Luke Rumbold

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we work, past and present

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Disclaimer: client stories are a 'snapshot' of a legal issue and do not contain the complete details nor full circumstances. Client stories in this annual report must not be relied upon as legal advice. People should always seek their own legal advice. Names* used in client stories in this report have been changed to protect identities.

HRCLS AWAHS Lawyer Karen Bowley, HRCLS Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers and UMFC CEO Luke Rumbold at the unveiling of the Bunmabunmarra painting in the HRCLS foyer on 28 June 2018

UMFC CEO

The Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS) 'brand' in our community continues to grow, as evidenced in the positive outcomes achieved throughout the year. Despite the changing world and growing expectation for technology to fill service gaps, nothing beats on-the-ground, personal service. The human contact with a skilled professional helps reduce people's anxiety, and increases the chances of the professional being able to understand the nature of the oftencomplex legal matters in an efficient manner.

The rebranding exercise in 2017 has been a success, and assisted in growing the awareness within the community and social wellbeing sectors that work closely with people who need legal help. Every year we point to the growth in demand, and HRCLS again broke records in several months for calls to the service. This increase has not happened by accident, and I commend the HRCLS team for understanding local relationships and continually working towards the goal of reaching as many people in desperate need of legal assistance as possible through this approach.

Move a successful step forward

The first full year of co-location with UMFC at 27-29 Stanley Street has exceeded expectations. My impression from speaking with managers and staff is the professional connectivity has been greatly enhanced both ways, through the conversations that have arisen due to the physical proximity of the agency. Better integration across services has strengthened awareness and educational knowledge of what HRCLS can do to help UMFC clients. In Wangaratta, the HRCLS presence is the largest it has been, and the connection between staff continues to grow. As these relationships thrive, more opportunities will present to add to how we all make an impact in our areas.

One recommendation from the independent consultants' report in 2016 was the establishment of a leadership team. This bolstering of internal support for Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers has improved the structure of the team, and having two former principal lawyers alongside the current one to provide their experience, wisdom and expertise is significant. Valued staff returning to the service, such as Karen Keegan and Andrea Georgiou, is a healthy sign the legal service is a quality organisation.



Solid reputation

Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers' presentation to the UMFC Board in February this year outlined the impressive breadth of activities occurring at the legal service. The Annual Report 2016-17 was an outstanding publication and Board members were left in no doubt that our legal service continues to link our community with the law.

Another indication of the HRCLS reputation was the attraction of two major guests to Law Week 2018. To have Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE and NSW Woman Lawyer of the Year 2017 Kylie Beckhouse as keynote speakers demonstrates the regard in which the legal service is held within its sector. This only occurs through having credibility, and is worthy recognition of how fortunate we are to have a high quality community legal service in our region.

Luke Rumbold,

UMFC CEO

HRCLS leadership team, from left, senior lawyers Ali Maher and Karen Keegan, Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers and Operations Manager Ashlie Barclay.

Principal Lawyer/Manager

This year has been our busiest yet, with our service reaching the highest number of people ever recorded. The demand for legal assistance in the community is overwhelming and we will continue to work to maximise the impact we have, as well as reaching those who are most in need.

Many of the people we help are vulnerable to legal issues due to difficult life events, such as family violence, homelessness or losing their job. Others face disadvantage in their everyday lives, due to disability, being a single parent or having English as their second language. The positive feedback we received from many people we served confirmed how vital our services are for our community. This shows how much of a difference it can make to those going through crisis or trauma to get our timely legal help, and be given compassion and kindness along the way.

The outcomes achieved by our staff and volunteers are outstanding, particularly in light of the challenges of providing services in such a large geographic catchment and within a cross border context, and we continue to deliver on the aims of our Strategic Plan 2015-18.

We have also seen fantastic results in key projects, such as the Invisibles Hurdles Project, Family Violence to Family Law - Continuity of Service Project and Generalist Specialist CLC Project, which are outlined in this report.

HRCLS stalwart and former principal lawyer Karen Bowley tendered her resignation, and we accepted this with a mixture of sadness and happiness for her as she enters retirement and an exciting phase of her life.

A heartfelt thankyou to our many partners, including our funders, peak bodies and the numerous local services who work with us to ensure that we make a difference. We appreciated the visit from NSW Attorney-General Mark Speakman for the opportunity it gave us to speak about our work and the challenges we face in the future, as well as thanking him in person for his considerable and ongoing support for our sector.

We are also privileged to be a program auspiced by UMFC, and thank the Senior Management and Board for their continued support. The co-location at 27-29 Stanley Street has been successful and we look forward to building on our strong relationship under the one roof in the future.

Sarah Rodgers, HRCLS Principal Lawyer/Manager



"I commend the HRCLS team for its hard work, compassion and dedication to help those most in need get legal assistance and positive outcomes. The stories in this Annual Report are testament to the huge difference this makes for people who have found themselves in legal difficulty and hardship, and how our support enables them to get their lives back on track."

Sarah Rodgers, Principal Lawyer/Manager



Volunteer lawyers Kip Frawley and Wendy Couzens help clients on a regular basis at the Wangaratta evening clinic on Tuesday every forthight



"Volunteer work is something I've always done, whether that is in the legal, community or sporting space and this is one small way that I can use my training to help people doing it tough. I get exposure to different areas of law and it reminds me of why I got into law in the first place. I'd encourage other lawyers if they have the time to get involved at HRCLS, because community legal centres' resources are thin and you can help people who need it the most."

Kip Frawley, Maurice Blackburn lawyer by day, HRCLS volunteer by night

2017-18 Volunteers

Lawyers

61 F &

Joe Blackshield Allison Bruce Eugene Butkowski Chelsea Campagna Vic Campagna Wendy Couzens Deborah Culhane Jye Cunneen Kip Frawley Jonathan Green Kathryn Hall Grahame Ingleton David Joseph Dusan Jovetic Ross Kearney Carlene Lamanna Michelle Matthews Jessica McKenzie Tessa Mead Sarah Noble Sarah Notarianni Mathew Read Narelle Sherwill Jill Smith Peter Uniacke hours

Wangaratta evening clinic volunteers Sarah Notarianni and Grahame Ingleton catch-up at the Thank You Volunteer night, as part of Volunteers Week in May 2018 to acknowledge the excellent contribution of all our volunteers

Our Volunteers

Total 1304 hours 🛞

Practical Legal Training Students

Mathew Read Sarah Pearce Glenn Moody

Law student Claudia Weatherall

1080 ⊗ hours Report to the Community 2017 guest speaker NSW Cross Border Commissioner James McTavish with the HRCLS team on November 9

Special thanks to our 2017-18 Operations team, Ashlie Barclay, Tracey Walker, Meaghan Frazer and Lorraine Murray, for keeping the office running in a smooth and efficient way. Your professionalism and dedication to ensuring HRCLS operates at a high level is appreciated and your contributions help us link our community with the law.

Staff

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Sarah Rodgers Principal Lawyer/Manager

Ashlie Barclay Operations Manager

Alison Maher Senior Lawyer

Karen Keegan Senior Lawyer

Karen Bowley Lawyer

Janet Osborne Lawyer

Sarah Caplice VLA Secondee Lawyer

Andrea Georgiou Lawyer

Beth Simpson Lawyer

Diana Bruce Lawyer

Deborah Fisher Lawyer

Jodie Wells Lawyer

Tessa Mead Lawyer

Tracey Walker Legal Assistant

Meaghan Frazer Reception/Administration Officer

Our Team

Hannah Niethe Reception

Simon Crase Community Legal Education Coordinator/Albury CLSD Regional Coordinator

Lorraine Murray (July 2017-May 2018) Acting Operations Manager

Michelle Matthews (July 2017-March 2018) Lawyer

Rebecca Deverell (July 2017-April 2018) Community Development Coordinator

Cameron Bloye (July 2017-August 2017) Youth Lawyer

Mae Mactier (July 2017-March 2018) Lawyer



Our Victorian Family Violence Project Sam* sought help from CAV sh after relocating from South Au

The Centre Against Violence (CAV) partnership supports women who have been subjected to family violence to get timely help with their legal issues, through a lawyer giving advice on-site at CAV Wangaratta and Wodonga offices. The presence of a lawyer within these settings has multiple benefits. It encourages CAV staff to identify when a client is experiencing legal problems, and creates an easy and early referral pathway to the lawyer to ensure those problems can be resolved as soon as possible. Secondary consultations between staff and the lawyer have been critical to the partnership's success. The targeted series of legal training for CAV staff, particularly in the areas of family law, family violence, intervention orders and consumer issues, has also increased knowledge and strengthened the referral process in a number of ways. Funding for the family violence specialist project is provided by the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation.

Decisive action and support helps anxious mother

Quick legal advice and ongoing support through a difficult Court proceeding resulted in a happy and relieved mother getting the best outcome for herself and her children. Sam^{*} sought help from CAV shortly after relocating from South Australia with her two young children. She was suffering debilitating health issues and dealing with ongoing abuse from the children's father and moved home to be closer to her family. The CAV worker contacted our service on behalf of Sam, and after a quick discussion with me, we identified that Sam needed urgent advice, and an appointment was made for the next day.

Sam met with me to tell me her story, and despite attempts to negotiate, the children's father issued proceedings in the Federal Circuit Court for Sam to return to South Australia with the children. With my support, Sam prepared her court material and a barrister was arranged to represent her in South Australia. Sam and I took part in the first hearing via telephone from our office, and while the outcome was not in her favour, Sam said she was grateful for the quick legal advice and felt supported and given the opportunity to have her say in Court.

Sam returned to South Australia and I made a warm referral for her to a community legal centre in that state. At a later hearing, the Court allowed Sam to return to North East Victoria. She emailed me on the day, relieved with the outcome: "I'm soo sooo happy!!! And so grateful for everyone that's helped me. Especially you! Thankyou so much Jodie!!!"

Sam is now living in Victoria, close to family and friends, and I continue to give her assistance to finalise her property matters.

148 clients

92% at financial 8% disadvantage Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people Disability 30% 20% at risk of homelessness

Top 3 Problem types 1.38% Children's matters 2.16% Property in marriage 3.12% Victims of Crime

158 advices + 38 clients assisted on a

casework basis Jodie Wells, Lawyer

Ability to relate grows strong relationship

"Jodie always explains the legal process and specific and relevant examples of this area of law in plain language...I would recommend Jodie as a facilitator, bridging the gap between legal jargon and everyday situations the women I work with face...Jodie is a valuable asset to our organisation and to the women I work with and I will continue to refer to her with confidence." Clare Grogan

Family Violence Recovery Counsellor Centre Against Violence

Picture Above: Integrated Family Violence Service principal strategic advisor Alison Maclean, with HRCLS Family Violence Lawyer Jodie Wells and HRCLS Gateway Health Lawyer Deb Fisher at the Ovens Murray Family Violence community information breakfast session in Wangaratta at Gateway Health in March 2018 HRCLS Victorian Continuity of Service family lawyer Alison Maher presents at the Ovens Murray Family Violence community information breakfast session in Wangaratta at Gateway Health in August 2017

Our COS project

2017-18 marked a full year of legal service delivery under the Family Violence to Family Law -Continuity of Service (COS) pilot. During this period, Alison Maher - Senior Lawyer, Michelle Matthews - Graduate Family Lawyer and Tracey Walker - Legal Assistant, delivered the services. COS was designed to provide holistic legal services and assistance for people who experienced family violence and family law problems with other legal issues such as infringements, tenancy and social security law. COS was funded by Victoria Legal Aid under a two-year pilot starting in July 2016. We worked effectively in partnership with the police, the courts, private practitioners, child and family services, and family violence workers to ensure people received wrap-around care. Many of them have complex issues, such as mental illness, drug and alcohol, disability, literacy, homelessness and low income. In light of these complexities, their matters are often the most difficult to finalise, with many family law matters taking months, if not years, to complete. Our goal is to ensure that our clients receive an excellent legal service as well as feeling supported through the process. One satisfied client commented after a day in Court: "I am going to miss you all. I'll have to pop in and visit. Thank you for everything and thank you for believing in me."

Son and Dad unite for better times ahead

So, what does a bloke do when he thinks he is the father of a child. but can't really be sure? He doesn't know the mother very well, and doesn't really know which way to go. Some mates say "Walk away", others say "Mate, you've got to know". Thankfully one of them says, "Why don't you see a lawyer?" The more he thinks about it, he's got to know. His son deserves a dad. It's more than he ever had. So he sees his lawyer and gets funding for DNA testing. Yes, he is Dad! Now he has to go through the process of getting to know his son. But Mum is not sure. She doesn't trust Dad. He's caused her grief in the past. She even had an intervention order against him. Can he handle the job? Will he do the right thing by their son? So Dad decides to try harder. He does everything he can do to get himself in the best place to be a good father. He goes to drug and alcohol counselling, even though he hasn't used since well before his son was born. He agrees to attend parenting courses, and even starts a men's behaviour change course. The course is long and he has to score a lift each week because he doesn't have a car. His lawyer helps him to make the calls to the program managers and chases him up when he goes a bit quiet and is feeling a bit overwhelmed. The lawyer also helps him put a proposal together to start the mediation process. The first mediation goes well and Dad

Victoria Legal Aid Family Lawyer service

This position commenced through a partnership between Victoria Legal Aid and the Community Legal Sector in July 2006. Sarah Caplice is the Victoria Legal Aid secondee lawyer at HRCLS and brings a wealth of experience to this role as a family lawyer and trained Independent Children's Lawyer. Sarah provides advice in family law, family violence and child protection matters, across both sides of the border. Sarah regularly attended the Federal Circuit Court at Albury providing advice and advocacy to clients in family law matters. She also gave advice by phone and in person between July 2017 and March 2018. Sarah's clients are always appreciative of the legal expertise and generous nature which she brings to her role.

89 advices about family violence - Magistrates' Court of Victoria, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Myrtleford

336 clients phone or face-to-face **52 cases** appointment **opened** advice and negotiation, family dispute resolution and litigation in family law matters

Alison Maher, Senior Lawyer

is ready to meet his son. He's got a parenting plan which sets out when this happens, for how long, and what is expected of him. Mum has also received legal advice from her lawyer, and she understands she is doing the right thing in allowing her son the chance to form a relationship with his dad. She's OK. It wasn't as scary as she first thought. Everyone knows where they stand. The boy now has a mum and dad.

Our AWAHS partnership

With Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) becoming part of an integrated justice project, Invisible Hurdles, the number of clients who accessed our service increased astronomically. Visiting AWAHS for only a couple of hours per week created difficulties for clients and staff to know we were there. When the service increased to 1.5 days per week, we connected with the staff more often, joining in staff meetings, having lunch in the staff room and dropping by the Men's Shed. Being a more constant presence built trust and respect and was a major factor in being able to help more people with their legal problems.

The engagement with our Aboriginal community over a number of years produced few significant accomplishments. However this turned around when we gained additional funding to extend our partnership at AWAHS, a cross border service like our own, and the positive change was immediate.

Greater visibility is the key to success in such a partnership. Staff raised interesting legal questions and requested legal information at staff meetings. They came to understand the importance of resolving legal problems and the role it plays in improving the health of their patients. This resulted in staff referring more clients, and spending more time to consult with me about clients. Secondary consultations have been another positive from our partnership with AWAHS.

The reporting requirements of the Invisible Hurdles project were eye-

opening, to learn who we assisted and how many people sought our help. Young people experiencing family violence became a larger part of the clientele and this outcome would not have been achieved without the Invisible Hurdles project.

The wonderful support from AWAHS has contributed to the success of our integrated justice project, from the efficient staff on reception, to all staff who referred clients and supported them in contacting me. AWAHS provided a private room, made the appointments, sent reminders to clients, organised transport when required, and shared the appointment lists for our conflict check purposes.

As part of the Consumer Action Law Centre joint project, CALC lawyer Philippa Heir and CALC Koori Engagement Manager Kaylee Anderson visited AWAHS to discuss funeral insurance and strengthen ties between CALC and the AWAHS community. The transfer of trust from the HRCLS lawyer to Kaylee and then to Philippa who talked to some of the men about funeral insurance enabled the message to be accepted and heard in ways that it might not have been otherwise.

AWAHS also worked hard to organise a successful Wills Workshop this year, taking registrations, sending out reminders and providing a venue for free. Increasing the number of Wills held by AWAHS community members has been identified as a high legal need, and the response to the workshop was positive, thanks to Gilbert + Tobin lawyers giving their services for free to the AWAHS community.



"I have felt part of the AWAHS family and have enjoyed working with their team. I loved the staff asking me curly legal questions, whether in relation to a client, legal education or policy! I also saw this as a great opportunity to assist the Aboriginal community more widely by assisting in law reform, in particular the issues of funeral insurance and housing."

Karen Bowley, AWAHS Lawyer

Wills Workshop **4** Enduring Powers of Attorney (medical treatment) **17** Wills **13** Enduring Powers of Attorney **8** Appointment of Enduring Guardian Invisible Hurdles meeting, January 2018 with key partners. (Back from left) HRCLS Invisible Hurdles lawyer Andrea Georgiou, HRCLS principal lawyer Sarah Rodgers, NESAY community engagement manager Joy Ware, NESAY CEO Leah Waring, NESAY youth and families manager Georgie Gray, and Ray Ahmat (AWAHS) and (front from left) Adrian O'Callaghan (AWAHS), Federal Member for Indi Cathy McGowan and Huw Derwentsmith (Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre)

Our Invisible Hurdles Program

After a promising start, the Invisible Hurdles (IH) project made significant progress in year two, showing its worth and delivering positive outcomes for young people.

ANU evaluator Dr Liz Curran conducted a comprehensive final evaluation in February 2018 with support workers at partners, Wodonga Flexible Learning, the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) and the North East Support and Action for Youth Inc. (NESAY). Results demonstrated how the continual presence and strategy had built trust between lawyers and staff; staff had a deeper understanding of the project and could see how the young people were benefiting from the legal assistance; staff had gained more confidence to refer young people and also in the referral process; and there was more mutual understanding between staff and the IH lawyer.

In confirming how a project such as IH needs patience to deliver, young people in a focus group explained how trust between them and someone who is there to help takes a significant amount of time to create. They will not automatically connect, either of their own choice or prompting by a service provider, but will take their time to observe the lawyer and make a decision when they are comfortable. Without this trust, there will be limited or no interaction and no hope of solving the young person's legal problem.

Thanks to additional Legal Aid NSW funding, a dedicated AWAHS lawyer was appointed in October 2017. This had multiple impacts, with not only a greater presence at AWAHS, but also an increased presence at NESAY and the Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre due to the dedicated IH lawyer having a focus on two locations instead of three.

IH lawyers participated in the Health Justice Partnership Network Conference in October 2017, highlighting outcomes and learnings of IH project. In February 2018, principal lawyer Sarah Rodgers gave a similar presentation to the School Lawyer Network reference group in Melbourne. Federal Member for Indi Cathy McGowan was invited to meet with partners in a visit to NESAY in January 2018, as a result of a meeting with Ms McGowan's office in August 2017 with HRCLS staff.

In June 2018, the Victorian Government committed interim **43** referrals **43** referrals **43** advices **30** informal chats

"In home care kids can struggle with leases. They need skills for life as they have no parents. With one kid 71 homes over 16 years of his life, with access to this lawyer, they have had capacity built so they know. They know their rights and what external workers say is not always correct and so can question and see from the lawyer it's OK to question."

Invisible Hurdles partner support worker

funding of \$200,000 over two years for the project to continue. The first two years of the Invisible Hurdles project was made possible through funding received from the Victorian Legal Services Board Grant Program. A funding application for a further two years has also been submitted.

ANU evaluator Dr Liz Curran will launch the Full Final Report on 8 November.

gateway

Gateway Health integrated primary care manager Jonelle Hill-Uebergang, HRCLS Gateway Health Lawyer Deb Fisher, Gateway Health CEO Leigh Rhode and Gateway Health public relations officer Jane Harvey

Our Health Justice Partnership: Gateway Health

We were privileged to showcase our Gateway partnership, known as HALO (Holistic and Legal Outreach), at the Health Justice Australia Conference in Melbourne in 2017. This partnership has been in force for three years in Wodonga and two years in Wangaratta, and continues to grow and deepen as we help people from across the region who visit Gateway Health for appointments.. While we were sad to farewell Gateway Health CEO Leonard Peady, who had long been a champion of ours and health justice partnerships in general, we welcomed Leigh Rhode in his place, and have been thankful for her continued support and commitment to the HALO project.

A change of lawyers in Wodonga saw Tessa Mead step into the HALO role in April after Mae Mactier relocated. Throughout the year, we attended several staff meetings, (Support & Assessment Services, Family, Community & Culture & Child Health Intervention & Parenting Support, Alcohol & Other Drugs among others) to provide Legal Health Checks and information about our service. We also invited Gateway staff to training with the Consumer Action Law Centre in relation to family violence (Wodonga) and family law, fines and consumer issues (Wangaratta).

We were pleased to:

- attend Gateway's three open days in Wodonga, Wangaratta and Myrtleford
- set up a Law Week information table for the week in Wangaratta
- host a staff Morning Tea to talk about common legal issues that people face
- attend the opening of the Gateway Wangaratta expansion.

Discussions are under way to further embed the health justice partnership into Gateway Health's service. This will help deliver more formal training to Gateway staff on the wide range of legal issues we can assist with, and ensure they know how to link clients with our lawyers.

Joan's^{*} story is an example of the advantages of health justice partnerships.

Stressed pensioner gets Centrelink debt waived

Joan^{*} was on her way to her appointment at Gateway Health, when she saw our sign for free legal advice. Joan had been fighting with Centrelink about an overpayment she had incurred due to an income reconciliation going back two years, after her husband passed away. She had told a local Centrelink worker in person when this happened, and wanted to know what benefits she was entitled to receive. Unfortunately. the Centrelink record was not updated after her visit, and Joan was unknowingly receiving the pension, plus the benefits from her late husband's superannuation fund. Joan did not pay close attention to the Centrelink letters and statements and missed the error.

Joan first learnt of the problem when she received a letter from Centrelink stating she had a debt of more than \$21,000 which they wanted to recover. Joan requested a Centrelink internal review of the decision to erase the debt but this was unsuccessful. On top of this, and the grief at her husband's passing, Joan also suffered a terrible illness which created significant levels of pain and sleeplessness. Around this time,

Wangaratta Wyer awyer ay Rhode

76% financial 40% disadvantage Disability or mental illness Over 50 59%

Wodonga 78 clients 83% financial 41% disadvantage disability or mental illness Over 50 52%

Deb Fisher and Tessa Mead, lawyers

tragedy struck again within her family causing further grief and stress.

By the time she came seeking our assistance, Joan was anxious and overwhelmed and did not know where to turn. Due to the repayments Centrelink demanded, Joan was fretting about whether she could afford to use her heater over winter.

Working with a financial counsellor, Joan negotiated repayments to Centrelink that were reduced to a manageable level for her to keep living comfortably. We gathered further information and evidence, accessed specialist advice from Social Security Rights, and then compiled an appeal of Centrelink's decision to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Joan felt confident and empowered enough to attend the Tribunal in person, and despite them finding there was a debt to the Commonwealth, they waived the full amount of the debt due to Joan's special circumstances. **She contacted us after the decision came out and thanked us for our "effort and expert advice". "Your help and encouragement has removed the stress from my life", a relieved Joan said.**

HRCLS and Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre deliver legal advice to the community through a health justice partnership with Benalla Health. From July 2017 to February 2018, HRCLS delivered 28 face-to-face appointments during fortnightly visits.

riveri

Consumer Action Law Centre lawyer Lachlan Edwards and HRCLS seni lawyer Karen Keegan during a CALC visit as part of the joint project to increase the focus on helping people with consumer legal issues

Our CALC partnership

In late 2017, the Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) approached us about entering a partnership with them to test a model put forward by the Federation of Community Legal Centres Generalist Specialist CLC Project. The Project was funded and supported through Victoria Legal Aid's Community Legal Centre Innovation and Transformation Fund to improve the interaction between the 24 generalist and 25 specialist Community Legal Centres (CLCs) across Victoria.

Along with Barwon CLC, we began to identify and address the consumer law, credit law and insurance law needs of our clients through access to CALC's specialist knowledge. This involved visiting CALC, sitting in on their advice line, attending their case work meeting and building relationships with their team. Six months of training by CALC staff in person and online helped upskill our lawyers. CALC lawyers Lachlan Edwards, Philippa Heir, Lisa Grealy and Jesse Marshall visited us for training, secondary consultations and establishing clear referral pathways to CALC's expertise.

Prior to this project, calling the CALC worker line was seen, perhaps subconsciously, as a last resort by HRCLS lawyers. This is no longer the case, with calls to the worker line increasing from 13 in 2017 to 37 in the 6 months of the pilot.

Other project outcomes:

- CALC visit to Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and training at AWAHS
- Consumer training for local family violence workers
- Fines, Family Law and Consumer Training for community workers in Wangaratta

• Improved collaboration with UMFC financial counsellors

Increased consumer advice and casework

The final report of the Federation's project was due to be released in mid-August 2018. We can say that we have benefitted greatly from our part in this project. We are extremely grateful for CALC's support, expertise and investment in our service and look forward to continuing to work with them to achieve better outcomes for our clients into the future.

Legal road to success for car owner

Doris^{*} had been without a car for some time due to a number of reasons, including ill health. Now in the market for one, a 2006 car advertised by a private seller on carsales.com.au caught her eye. It was \$8,500 and came with a full service history, so she snapped it up, happy to finally have her own wheels.

As soon as she hit the road, Doris had problems; the car drove unsteadily and didn't idle well and soon broke down. The "books" were incomplete and may not have even referred to the car.

Doris managed to get the car home, but within days it needing towing and was back at the mechanic, who found significant problems with the car.

Doris went back to the seller who agreed to fix the car, but it became apparent a new engine, was needed, among other things. Doris was quite upset and didn't know where to go for help. So she sought legal advice from HRCLS. Initially, this seemed to be a consumer-to-consumer issue and fell outside the scope of CALC's expertise. However, CALC advised that if someone sells more than four cars a year in Victoria, they need to be licensed.

In investigating the case, we discovered the seller had been selling cars on a regular basis over the past few years and was not licensed as a motor car trader. We discussed the legal options with Doris, and she decided to "cut her losses" and get her money back.

We contacted the seller to talk about the matter over the phone, without success. A letter of demand was then sent, outlining their failure to be licensed as a motor car trader, and the breaches of the Motor Traders Act and Australian Consumer Legislation. The seller made no response to this, or the subsequent letter.

CALC had provided suggestions and peer-support along the way. After speaking with CALC about the possible next steps, we decided a complaint be lodged with Consumer Affairs Victoria about the unlicensed trading. HRCLS helped Doris make this complaint and provided all the supporting documents. Within a week of the complaint, the seller offered Doris a full refund and the costs she had incurred in repairs up until the time she returned it.

Deb Fisher, Lawyer

Our Impact Our Community

Top 10 NSW Locations 2017-18

150 Albury 119 Lavington North Albury **44** Corowa Deniliquin 4 Thurgoona 39 Springdale Jindera 1 Holbrook 11



Top 10 Problem Types 2017-18





1950
clients
ncrease207
cases
closed
221
cases411
duty
lawyer services opened



*Excludes duty lawyer services and legal tasks. #In 2017, CLASS replaced CLSIS as the data record system for the legal sector. As a result, categories have been restructured and this has altered some categories in comparison to previous years.

Who we help 69% female male 31%

4% People from non-English speaking backgrounds Low income **98%** earners (casework/ representation services)

11% Children & youth (0-25)

Aboriginal **8%** & Torres Strait Islander peoples People **51%** experiencing family violence

33% People with a disability or mental illness

Elderly **11%** 65 & over



Where we go 24140 km travelled





Our NSW Family Law Program

Keeping local kids in their extended family in child protection matters is at the core of the NSW Care Partner program. The NSW Care Partner Child Protection position was funded by NSW Legal Aid in November 2017.

With a focus on early intervention, the program's aim is to keep at-risk children with a family member, rather than have them placed in out-of-home (OOHC) care. The legal assistance we provide extends to parents and grandparents with contact issues after Children's Court Orders have been made.

Due to the shortage of lawyers locally who work in this field, one legal practitioner has described the position as "an invaluable resource and helps fill a gap in child protection service delivery." Communication with other service providers, such as Family and Community Services caseworkers, social workers, OOHC providers and other lawyers is key to determining the best outcome for the child.

At the weekly legal advice clinic at the Hub in Albury, we have capacity for five appointments per clinic. The majority of clients' problems relate to family law or child protection, however we will help with any legal issue

Helping people who are disadvantaged and have nowhere else to turn as they are unable to pay a lawyer and do not qualify for legal aid, is the focus of the NSW family law/family violence lawyer role. People impacted by family violence are often very vulnerable and generally relieved and grateful for our help to get them through the often confusing and stressful family law system. Most have complex legal issues that need solving. The ongoing casework we provide to family violence victims includes children's matters, divorce and small property settlements. Our representation in court, or at family dispute resolution, also assists people to get positive outcomes.

The weekly face-to-face advice clinic at the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing in Albury is a safe place for women to obtain legal advice, without it being obvious to the outside world. The monthly outreach clinics in Deniliguin, Finley and Corowa, allow people in rural and remote areas to access faceto-face legal advice without having to travel a long distance. Advice is also given over the phone for people who can't get to a clinic. This role is funded by the Commonwealth Government and commenced in mid-December 2017.

"The weekly legal clinic located at the Women's Centre has been a muchappreciated service for our clients, as it is easily accessible in a safe and supportive environment. It took a while for it to be fully utilised but has slowly gained momentum. The feedback we have received has described the service as very helpful, very caring and one woman commented how no one needs to feel hurt or not needed."

Lila Beamish, CEO of the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing

NSW Care Partner Program 77 legal advice services

Family Law

85% clients female clients 83% 78% financial disadvantage 10% homeless or at risk of homelessness

Beth Simpson and Diana Bruce, lawyers

No court a blessing for Mum

Through our strong relationships with other lawyers and commitment to assist clients to avoid Court where possible, a single mother of two was reunited with her children without the delay, stress and uncertainty experienced in a Court appearance.

Jane* has two children, John*, 2, and Jill*, 5. The children lived with Mum most of the time and saw Dad occasionally. After suffering family violence in their relationship, Jane was afraid of the kids' father and felt intimidated when she discussed issues about the children with him.

One weekend, the father kept John and Jill beyond the agreed time without Jane's consent. Jane was scared for the children's safety and anxious because she didn't know when she would see them again. She came to us for advice after a local court referred her our way. After explaining the options to Jane, we wrote to the father asking him to return John and Jill immediately, or Jane would apply to the Court to get the children back. A few days later, the father saw a local lawyer about the letter. With everyone working together, Jane and the children's father agreed the children return to their mother immediately, and negotiated how they could spend significant time with Dad on a regular basis.

l learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.

CLSD Program Manager Jenny Lovric facilitates the Albury CLSD Action Plan 2018-2020 planning day at Albury Library Museum in February 2018 Fair Trading NSW engagement and complaints officer Belinda Parker talks to Moama locals about their issues during the CLSD Border Roadshow 2018

Our CLSD Connection

An Action Plan for the next two years will guide major Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) projects to target the unmet legal needs in the Albury CLSD region. Partners in the Legal Aid NSW-led CLSD effort to reduce legal issues used data and on-the-ground knowledge to identify four priority areas.

Priority 1: Increased outreach in Lavington and Deniliquin

Priority 2: Increased assistance at Albury Local Court for defendants to ADVOs

Priority 3: Explore Health Justice Partnership in Albury

Priority 4: Address financial hardship

The outcomes are tenable and partners expressed confidence that the projects can be implemented successfully to meet the aims, which will go towards decreasing the unmet legal need in those areas. HRCLS continued its role as the CLSD Regional Coordinator, with Simon Crase organising the partner meetings, acting as project liaison and reporting to the CLSD Unit. Funding for the CLSD program and all projects is provided by Legal Aid NSW.

Projects to help our communities

Road to better service

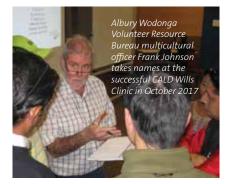
HRCLS took the lead in the 2018 Border Roadshow, February 26-28. The Roadshow toured Tocumwal, Mathoura, Moama, Mulwala and Barham and was well received by locals and partners, including Intereach, Murray River Council and Berrigan Shire. Fair Trading NSW, Revenue NSW and Legal Aid NSW Work Development Order program joined HRCLS in offering assistance to people in these towns. People were grateful for the opportunity to meet face-to-face, and get issues resolved on-the-spot. With tweaking and further consideration, the Roadshow could become an annual event, welcomed by service providers and community members alike.

Where there's a Will there's a way

The culturally and linguistically diverse Wills Clinic in October 2017 exceeded all expectations, when more than 90 people from the Bhutanese and Sudanese communities on the Border turned out to hear why they needed a Will at the Mirambeena Community Centre.

Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau multicultural officer Frank Johnson played a pivotal role in the previous 18 months encouraging these communities to get their life planning documents in place. This need had been identified, and it is important that Wills are in place to determine how belongings are legally distributed. Local private lawyers volunteered their time to give advice and take instructions before Wills were drafted and signed. Almost 50 people now have a Will, and the community is embracing the concept, which is not part of their traditional laws and customs.

HRCLS NSW outreach lawyer Janet Osborne, Revenue NSW aboriginal client advisory officer 'Bud' Crawford and Finley Intereach Hub cordinator June Madden set up in Tocumwal on the first leg of the CLSD Border Roadshow 2018



In February 2018, the first Aboriginal Wills Clinic in two years was held at AWAHS. Almost 20 people got a free Will, Enduring Powers of Attorney, thanks to Gilbert + Tobin donating their time to take instructions and draft the documents.

On the money

The Women's Centre and Anglicare Riverina held their first Financial Smarts workshop, which helped women understand how to manage money, pay bills, contact free legal services, access Good Shepherd Microfinance Loans, and prepare a budget. These workshops will become a regular event and the aim is to hold them in the CLSD region, particularly where a high level of disadvantage and vulnerability exist.



Our NSW Outreach

Another year doing the rounds of the Southern Riverina of NSW has yielded another year of kilometres, roadshows, networking with service providers, but most importantly and fundamentally, seeing clients and giving them assistance to identify and resolve their legal matters.

In Deniliquin, Finley, Corowa, Holbrook and Henty, we continued to see clients at the local Intereach office or library on a fortnightly basis. The range of issues cropping up included family law, children's issues, family violence credit and debt, tenancy and wills and estates.

Often the assistance we provide can be as simple as information for people to manage their own issue or get help from a range of other agencies. The sorts of issues can be cyclical, and we are often concerned that people living in isolated and less prosperous regional and rural communities can be victims of systematic legal problems, such as unsolicited callers selling of expensive goods with credit contracts "tacked on". In effect, people are coerced to signing up for goods they never contemplated or got advice about. Sometimes they say "yes" because they are polite and too taken aback to ask the right questions.

Divorce Not So Easy to Come By

The new Family Court divorce applications are supposed to be streamlined and simple for people to access. It is largely expected that online applications can be lodged with ease. The reality can be not quite the same as the vision. Many people we encounter are not able to lodge online as they lack computer literacy and access, and sometimes the electronic means to pay.

But a new stumbling block we discovered has affected clients such as Bernard* and Barry*. Both these men came to our service wanting to file for divorce. However, their former partners from long ago were nowhere to be found. In both cases, the separations were not acrimonious or violent. One was a surprise when it occurred more than twenty years ago. She just packed and left in a day. The other was more gradual - each knowing that it was over - and it just took someone finding the courage to get in the car and leave.

Over the years, neither Barry nor Bernard needed to contact their former wives. So they didn't. But when both wanted to divorce, the "I just love getting in the car early in the morning and knowing that I will meet six or more new clients, each with a story which is unique and yet frighteningly similar. They will often feel a bit embarrassed by having to share their story, and sometimes they are a bit fearful they will be told their problem is insurmountable. So it's important to put people at their ease, and make them feel that it's okay to tell their story. And sometimes, we can help them sort their problem out on the spot and they can sleep a bit easier. Our job is that good."

Janet Osborne, Lawyer

Court told them they had to find their former partners and serve them with divorce applications. If they were unable to do this, they would need to file an affidavit stating the lengths they had gone to in locating and telling their former partner, "I want a divorce."

We provided the support these men needed to advise them how to conduct a proper search, how to effect "substituted service", and if this was not possible, how to prepare and lodge a "Dispense with Service" application. Neither man would have been able to complete this important step in their life without our advice and assistance. Many times, access to justice can simply be a matter of not having the reading and writing knowhow to get the job done. That's why we're here. HRCLS Senior Lawyer Karen Keegan, Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE and Assistant Ombudsman Early Resolution Team Bridget Dixon at Law Week Launch 2018 on May 11

Our Generalist Services living in his car, as he was not able to find suitable long-term, stable

This year was the first the Generalist Senior Lawyer position has been fully functional. This position is pivotal to HRCLS functioning efficiently to deliver the best outcomes for the service. It allows the Principal Lawyer to focus and work strategically and outwardly with funders and stakeholders. while the Generalist Senior Lawyer oversees the day-to-day provision of high quality generalist legal advice and services for disadvantaged people. Additionally, a leadership team structure was introduced, which included the Principal Lawyer, **Operations Manager, Family Law** Senior Lawyer and Generalist Senior Lawyer. The Generalist Senior Lawyer can act diligently to make operational changes to the delivery of legal services, in light of changes to the law, to client needs, to staffing levels and changing unmet legal needs. This responsiveness directly benefits people who need access to legal assistance, and significantly improves access to legal services, consistent with our Strategic Plan 2015-18.

Collaborative approach gets big win for homeless man

Teddy* left his home at 14 due to family trauma and fractured relationships within his family. Since then he has been couch surfing and

living in his car, as he was not able to find suitable long-term, stable accommodation. Teddy secured transitional housing, and became connected with local services. Due to his homelessness, he functioned in an anxious state, and this was heightened without the structure, adult guidance and supervision most people take for granted. This resulted in Teddy's decision-making purely being focused on survival and safety. his behaviours centring on fight or flight. His homelessness affected his ability to control his conduct and this led to a string of fines, from failure to vote, to numerous traffic offences.

Being homeless wasn't just a case of not having a permanent roof over this head. Teddy was unable to provide a regular address to enrol to vote and had been utilising cars as means of transport and as shelter. He had a low level of literacy due to interrupted schooling, which impacted on his ability to understand written information.

We prepared a special circumstances application to get the fines revoked. Letters of support from local services supported his application. Maintaining communication with Teddy was hard. He would regularly be uncontactable, even though he was connected with local support.

After almost two years, his application was heard, and all matters were proven and dismissed. The extended Intervention Order Duty List – Wodonga, Wangaratta and Myrtleford

272 clients represented on a duty basis 174 female

98 male Figure includes family violence applicants and respondents, personal safety IVO applicants and respondents, cross applications and adjourned matters on several occasions.

Volunteer Clinic **364** clients **208** female **156** male

Karen Keegan, Senior Lawyer

time period in resolving this matter for Teddy was due to him dropping in and out of contact with us. We would not have been able to resolve this matter for Teddy without the collaboration and support we got from local services.

Pro bono boost - Evening Volunteer Boost

On regular Tuesday evenings in Wodonga and fortnightly in Wangaratta, local lawyers gave their time to see 364 clients. Our volunteer clinics have a long history of success, and the contribution of local lawyers giving their time and expertise allows our service to give free legal advice to people who would otherwise miss out due to our lack of capacity. HRCLS lawyers Deb Fisher and Karen Keegan had responsibility for Wangaratta and Wodonga respectively, and they were again pleased with the high level of professionalism from all volunteers to give first-rate advice to our clients.

Cur Community Legal Education

Promotion of Service and Family Law/Family Violence sat at the top of the Community Legal Education (CLE) presentation list, in a year where lawyers connected with community service workers on a regular basis. With almost 700 people benefiting from 64 CLE sessions, a targeted approach resulted in more family violence presentations being delivered than the previous year. Our need to continually remind our key partners about our service, as well as inform new groups and organisations about how we can help people requiring legal assistance, follows the introduction of the first HRCLS CLE Plan in 2016-17. Our Legal Health Check training helps service workers identify legal problems their clients may be struggling with, and how to link to our legal service.

NSW outreach lawyer Janet Osborne is a guest speaker at the Holbrook Ageing with Grace Seminar in September 2017

An example of this proactive approach is the commitment from HRCLS Lawyer Jodie Wells to deliver a series of CLE structured for Centre Against Violence (CAV) workers. Detailed feedback collected after early sessions not only helped guide topics for the series, but also showed how effective CLE gives practical knowledge for workers to usefully apply in their roles. Having a basic understanding of the complexities of a legal issue, or aspect of the law, gives workers confidence to speak with their clients about the importance of getting legal advice as soon as a problem is identified. As a

result of this relationship building, referrals from CAV increased, with a greater number of workers contacting the service. Referrals are also being made earlier or at times before a legal issue arises – for instance, before a woman leaves home, which can support the woman with the knowledge to make informed decisions.

We are also grateful to our partners, including Albury District Law Society, Halliday Solicitors and Nevin Lenne Gross, for assisting with Wills and Life Planning and Estate presentations, as well as Seniors Rights Victoria and Seniors Rights Service NSW for increasing their presence in our region and educating the local communities.

Major takeaways

"Being mindful of when a woman may be contravening a family court order after receiving a direction/advice from Child Protection (CP). And how if CP haven't actually made a court order in regards to those children the woman will be held accountable for those contraventions. Therefore it is very important that any woman considering contravening an order for whatever reason gets legal advice about this before doing so!" **Centre Against Violence worker**

"That there is still more to be done in the area of family and domestic violence, which is being addressed with changes in the law, that it is



HRCLS lawyer Karen Bowley (middle) watches on while interpreters Celestin Mwala (Swahili) and Brinda Bhujel (Nepali) relay her message to 90 attendees at the CALD Wills Clinic in October 2017

important to stay up to date with the changes in the legislation, even minor ones to be the best help to those who need it. Also learned that elder abuse is becoming quite a prevalent issue and how this is being addressed." Wodonga TAFE Diploma of Community Services student

"Please accept our most sincere thanks for the support you have given our work. Your expertise and professionalism has contributed to increasing the communities' engagement with our information sharing campaign, and we are grateful." Alison Maclean, Principal Strategic Advisor, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Ovens Murray Integrated Family Violence Committee

64 678 sessions participants Law Week Launch 2018 guest speaker Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE and MC, HRCLS volunteer lawyer Ross Kearney at The Cube Wodonga on 11 May, 2018 Presented by Victoria

community with the naw

Our Law Week 2018

Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE and NSW Woman Lawyer of the Year 2017 Kylie Beckhouse were the headline guest speakers for the two major events in Law Week 2018. While the HRCLS motto is 'Linking the community with the Law', Law Week is a chance for the service to extend beyond legal assistance to broader legal education and raising awareness of aspects of the legal system.

The Law Week Launch on 11 May at The Cube in Wodonga, with special guest Ms Glass, was an ideal way to recognise the start of the biggest week on the calendar. Ms Glass explained her role, highlighting how an independent Ombudsman can affect change through recommendations to Government, and showing examples of fair and just outcomes where wrongdoings had occurred. Ms Glass also praised the significant work the community legal sector does to help people in need, and how this work was vital. HRCLS volunteer Ross Kearney played the MC role with aplomb, in front of guests including Member for Benambra Bill Tilley, NSW Cross Border Commissioner James McTavish, Clayton Utz representatives Hai-Van Nguyen and Susie Flynn, ANU project

evaluator Dr Liz Curran and Lisa Grealy from the Consumer Action Law Centre. Ms Glass was joined by Assistant Ombudsman Early Resolution Team Bridget Dixon, who met with HRCLS lawyers to talk about a referral pathway to the Ombudsman's office.

Almost 60 women from the legal fraternity gathered at Hovell Tree Inn on 17 May for the popular Women in Law Breakfast to hear Ms Beckhouse talk on the topic 'The rise and fall of the Australian Family Court system'. As the current Director of Family Law at Legal Aid NSW, Ms Beckhouse delivered a strong overview of how the Family Court system is letting down families, including a snapshot of how this is being felt in the Albury region. It was fantastic to see not only lawyers attend, but also staff who play a crucial role in ensuring legal practices and services run smoothly and efficiently.

HRCLS also flew the Law Week flag with a Law Week stall in Wangaratta, several community legal education sessions and morning teas with key partners.







Top: NSW Cross Border Commissioner James McTavish, Member for Benambra Bill Tilley, and HRCLS Senior Lawyer Karen Keegan at the Law Week Launch 2018

Middle: Clayton Utz Victorian pro bono lawyer Susie Flynn, Clayton Utz senior associate Hai-Van Nguyen and HRCLS Lawyer Karen Bowley at the Law Week Launch 2018

Bottom: HRCLS senior lawyer Alison Maher with Albury Wodonga Family & Domestic Violence Committee chair Dr Amanda Cohn at the Women in Law Breakfast 2018

Our voice in the media

Our local media play a vital role in helping us communicate with our community. Social justice drives our service, and we are committed to standing up for people who deserve legal assistance. Whether we are highlighting how our justice system can work better for people in need, calling on Government to introduce new laws, or improve existing ones, for the benefit of the community, or standing with partners as they work towards better outcomes for people how are vulnerable and doing it rough, we pride ourselves on the public stances we take.

Our thanks to all the media outlets in our region for recognising the importance of our work, and helping educate their audiences about the impact we have in our communities. Focusing on the local efforts to tackle family violence, elder abuse, homelessness and issues facing youth, is all part of a whole-ofcommunity approach to solve these problems.

TTY JANET HOWIE

NEWS

NORTH East groups have urged the Victorian gov-emment to reject potential changes to tenancy laws they say would reduce the safety, stability and privacy of renters.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service and Boyond Housing are concerned by proposals that could make evictions quicker and easier, options if adopted could disallow landlords to impose additional lease conditions and place restrictions on tenants having goests to stay.

They are two of 54 organisations that signed an open letter to Premier Daniel Andrews on Thursday regarding

the present review of the Res

We need to be protecting these people, not making things harder for them. Deborah Fisher

proportionately affect vul-nerable Victorians, such as those with a mental illness. "We need to be protecting

these people, not making things harder for them." she said.

Mrs Fisher said the service supported many of the pro-

"Just think through the implications of some these changes which swing the balance of power more to landlords than is perhaps

Intended or is wise," she said. Beyond Housing chief executive Celia Adams said the act needed to be fair and balanced for both tenants and landlords but also recognise people needed somewhere to call home, not just a root over their heads.

Stability for tenants is also good for landlords," she said. "Generally speaking prop-

erties are better maintaine landlords can avoid re-letting costs, advertising and other costs associated with changing tenants on a reguhar basis.

New tenancy legislation and regulations are due to be introduced into the Victorian Parliament in carly 2018.

Lack of funding leads to gaps in family law

NEWS

to reach outlying regions

A sector providers and a contractivities and a contractivities of sector along the barriers also providers and a contractivities of sector along the barriers and Woolnges the Maine sector the Maine secto rat of Ass and

have rights People urged to speak up about abuse

Elderly citizens

ter abuse occurring. World Elder Abuse Awaro-World Elick Abuse Awarn-me Day is on today, and such the World Health Organ-ation helicvering elder aluse transfor helicvering elder aluse transfor people to report when a ciderly person has been armed in score way. Hume Riverina Commi-ity Legal Service senior law-re Karms Keegan said elder. See wai a highly compli-act issue but everyose has ghts regardless of age. "Just because you get old, bent" mean you become a cond-class citizen and have to legal rights," Mc Keegan ident

The chlerity deserve to be pected and the more than to be dose to encourage gie who experience elder me to speak up, the bet-

LOCAL service provides m encouraging the commis-say to speak up if they see further above covering. Along with the shame of

"Having your affairs in der and documents in pli-helps reduce the risk of elithe experience, people can feel helpless in their situation due to the common dynamic of the relationship between abuse, particularly around nances," Ms Kengan said. "Elder abuse is a form domestic violence and can t

of the relationship between existin and States. "When it occurs, it can be very distribution of the user of the states of the set of the states of the states with a cooling the abuse," the stoce from the states of the abuser for care, for sup-port, for transport, for sup-port, for transport, or because they have no one clear who will help them."

will help them." Service workers play a vi-tal role in identifying elder abuse, and given the complex-name of how it can persent, it is important (hey understand some of the ways elder abuse can be rokaced. Ms Korgan said elderly people need to have a Power

20 | Hume Riverina Community Legal Service

many forms. Financial alt as at the top of the list

of Amorney appointed a wishes clearly stated in a w

remains a the top of the list. "This can be as strapic using 520 here and there of Mun's pure, or a non-the strapict meriod of the and making Mun and lower feel uncomfortable as they overtake the maidence." Me Keegan periode service providen auch as Northeast Health Wangarata for their pro-active approach to iden-tifying elder abase and acting in the best interests of those poople in their care.

in the ocut interests of those people in their care. For free legal assistance, phono Hume Riverina Com-munity Legal Service on 1800 918 377.





risk from

Tenants at

THE BORDER MAIL Friday August 18, 2017

Hame Nuerina CLS (Discontinuinged - Oct 25 instanting Our Kews with boldwin k

numity Legal Centres NSW (Scherow Mar 20



Our social media connection

Social media helps us link our community to the law. Our strong presence on Twitter and Facebook keeps people informed of what's going on in the community legal centre and social health and wellbeing sectors. As our reach and connections grow, we're grateful for our friends and colleagues in our sector and others helping spread our messages, and also sharing what they have to say as they try to improve the lives of people they care for and support in their communities.





Hume Riverina Community Legal Service With our fe ids burn Women's Centre for Health and Well-being Albury Wodenga at STEP OUT Against Violence Albury Wodenga Interpoutav #100mm



dr 1.540 E Canton

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service June 21 - Q Lurch and selles with Cor uther Action Law Centre





Hume Riverina Come Barclay and 2 others. June 18 · @ nity Legal Service is with Ashie -2-

Our team commemorating World Elder Abuse Awareness Day #WEAAD today, along with our filends at Wills Maria Catholic Himmes Aget Care in #Wangentatis. Thoraks to Wangentatic Orronofic for the article in today's paper raising awareness of this important issue. Together we can make a ce #losakup #los





CALC consultant Taimur Siddiqui, Senior Lawyer Karen Keegan, Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers, Lawyer Deb Fisher and CALC Project Manager Michael Tamblyn

Our Partners and Networks

UMFC

Albury & District Law Society

Albury Community Health

Albury Family and Community Services

Albury Library Museum

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service

Albury Wodonga Family Domestic Violence Network

Albury Wodonga Family Law Pathways Network

Albury Wodonga Health

Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau

Anglicare

Australian National University (ANU)

Benalla Health

Benalla Flexible Learning Centre

Berrigan Jerilderie Interagency Network

Beyond Housing

CD CLE Working Group Meetings

Centre Against Violence

Clayton Utz

Community Legal Centres NSW

Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department

Consumer Action Law Centre

Cooperative Legal Service Delivery

Corowa Interagency Network

Court Support Network

Deniliquin Interagency Network

Department of Justice and Regulation (Victoria)

Dispute Settlement Centre, Hume

Emergency Relief Network

Federation of Community Legal Centres

Gateway Health

Gilbert + Tobin

Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre

Greater Hume Shire Network

Health Justice Partnership Learning Network

Housing, Homeless and Human Services Network

Hume Region Homelessness Network

Intereach

Junction Support Services

Legal Aid NSW

Men's Behaviour Change Consortium

Merri Health Victims Assistance Program

Multicultural Interagency Network

National Association of Community Legal Centres

NSW Police

North East Law Association

North East Multicultural Association

North East Support and Action for Youth Inc. (NESAY)

Ovens Murray Integrated Family Violence Network

Regional Disability Advocacy Service

Rural, Regional and Remote Networks

St David's Uniting Care

School Lawyer Reference Group

The Hub, Albury

Victoria Police

Victoria Legal Aid

Victorian Legal Services Board Grants Program

Wangaratta Court

WEstjustice

Wodonga Aboriginal Network

Wodonga Court

Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre

Wodonga TAFE

Women's Health Goulburn North East

Women's Centre for Health & Wellbeing

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

Yarrawonga Mulwala Interagency Network

Yes Unlimited

Youth Area Network Meetings

YouthLaw

HRCLS lawyers Karen Keegan and Karen Bowley are delighted with the Bunmabunmarra artwork



Our Cultural Journey HRCLS with the comments

The desire to create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples led to an eye-catching piece of Aboriginal artwork displayed in a prominent position at HRCLS. Acting Operations Manager Lorraine Murray discovered the work of local Wiradhuri artist Dan Bundadhaany Clegg and knew he was the right person to create a unique piece of artwork for HRCLS. In a brief meeting, Dan quickly understood the connection of

HRCLS with the community and the legal world and mixed these components together to produce Bunmabunmarra (to show, help and assist). In Dan's words, "This painting demonstrates the often complex pathways to knowledge and direction through Elders and Senior Law Men/Women based on Wiradhuri learning models. It tells of a journey for knowledge in law (and lore), social instruction and cultural conduct." The story also drew on Buugang, the Bogong Moth, to embody the coming together of people and the setting aside of differences. In traditional times,



many people from different first nations would gather at a large site by the big river (Murray) in the local area.

Bunmabunmarra was unveiled to the public on June 28 in the HRCLS foyer in front of guests, including AWAHS CEO David Noonan and UMFC Board members.

Photos printed with permission from Dan Clegg. ABOVE: HRCLS principal lawyer Sarah Rodgers thanks artist Dan Clegg for the amazing artwork he created to be proudly displayed in the HRCLS foyer

Report to the Community

As a cross border legal service, HRCLS welcomed the NSW Cross Border Commissioner James McTavish as special guest at the Report to the Community 2017, which also included the launch of the 2016-17 Annual Report. Mr McTavish spoke about his role, a growing list of achievements and encouraged people to raise cross border issues and anomalies with his office. Mr McTavish told the audience his job was to advocate for the resolution of issues for NSW businesses, organisations and people, and to help them navigate the system and provide Government with solutions. He also said he understood how people in Albury Wodonga saw the twin city as a single community and viewed life as borderless.

In front of more than 40 partners and friends, HRCLS Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers outlined the year's highlights and UMFC Director Client Services Sheri Moulton spoke



about the contribution HRCLS made to the agency and the community.

The Report concluded with a musical extravaganza, the Ukelegals showing they have more than one string to their lawyer bow, happily playing 'It's Hard to Be Humble'.

ABOVE: HRCLS Principal Lawyer Sarah Rodgers speaks to the audience at the Report to the Community in November 2017 about how HRCLS focuses on making a difference for its community

Financial Statement

HRCLS is grateful for the significant funding received in 2017-18 and thanks all funders. These vital contributions allow HRCLS to give much-needed legal assistance to vulnerable and disadvantaged people in North East Victoria and the Southern Riverina of NSW. The table below details the sources, purpose and funding for 2017-18.

Source	Purpose	Breakdown	Total
	Generalist Commonwealth	\$ 524,484	
Attorney-General's Department (Commonwealth)	Family Law / Family Violence Outreach NSW	\$ 176,440	\$ 752, 724
Commonwealthy	SACS ERO – Cth	\$51,800	
	Generalist State	\$214,676	\$330,729
Victorian State Government (Victoria Legal Aid)	Family Violence – State	\$ 63,507	
(Victoria Ecgar Alu)	SAC ERO - State	\$ 52,546	
	One-off funding	\$ 66,476	\$ 147,555
NSW State Government (Legal Aid NSW)	Cooperative Legal Service Delivery	\$21,229	
	NSW Care Partner	\$ 59,850	
Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria Legal Aid)	Generalist – Specialist CLC Project	\$ 5,871	\$ 5,871
NSW Public Purpose Fund	Generalist NSW Outreach	\$ 75,984	\$75,984
	CLC Assistance Fund	\$ 12,500	\$ 52,379
Department of Justice & Regulation Victoria	Family Violence Duty Lawyer Fund	\$ 15,000	
	Family Violence Fund	\$24,879	
			\$1,365,242

This is a summarised statement of income which is consistent with externally audited financial statements that are available (along with UMFC's Annual Report) by contacting UMFC on 02 6055 8000.

Replace caption with NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman (third from right) visits HRCLS to meet with local lawyers in November 2017

Our Voice for Change

Submissions

People deserve equal access to the law, and this is especially true for those calling regional and remote areas home. Making the system fairer for those who need our legal assistance—people with a disability or mental illness, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older people, children and young people, and people experiencing family violence—guides our attitude toward submissions to Government and law reform initiatives from our sector.

Our contribution through evidence, expertise and the everyday experience of people getting into legal difficulty helps create fairer and more effective law and policy that supports community wellbeing. The long-term benefits from this approach include legal problems being identified and managed before they reach crisis point, and people having greater control over their lives and a belief in which they can access justice when required.

Our shining lights

The HRCLS plaudits couldn't be much higher for Legal Assistant Tracey Walker, who richly deserved her **10-year service award** presented in November 2017 (pictured right). Tracey's amazing administrative effort for the Victoria Legal Aid secondee program and the COS Project, as well as dealing with the challenges of the changeover from CLSIS to CLASS, are appreciated by the entire HRCLS team. Her contribution has played no small role in the service operating at an exceptionally high level to consistently meet and beat targets.

Practical Legal Training (PLT) student Sarah Pearce volunteered for 114 days (855 hours) and assisted lawyers to deal with more cases and advices than otherwise would have been handled. Sarah's willingness to help out after she completed her studies gave her the opportunity to learn more from experienced lawyers, understand how a community legal service runs. and see the difference that can be made in people's lives through effective legal assistance. Her valuable input is acknowledged and her dedication to the service is appreciated by the HRCLS team.

While Operations Manager Ashlie Barclay was on maternity leave, Lorraine Murray stepped in to the role and delivered with a high level of professionalism. Lorraine's understanding of office processes and systems, and policy and procedure development will be remembered as much as her attention to detail (especially in regard to team meeting morning teas and ensuring evening volunteers had biscuits). Lorraine's lead in mapping out the early stages of the HRCLS cultural journey has the service well placed to continue this important aspect of our work.



And congratulations to Narelle Sherwill who was admitted in November 2017! Narelle has had a close connection with HRCLS over the years, through her volunteering and PLT, and we wish her all the best as she starts her career as a lawyer.

Our input for reform

- Submission to the Review of the Family Law System
- Review of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996 (Victoria)
- Review of NSW Government support for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in NSW
- Exposure Draft Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-examination of Parties) Bill 2017
- The Law Council of Australia – The Justice Project in Response to the RRR Australians Consultation Paper





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Monday - Friday: 9am-5pm (closed between 1pm-1:45pm)

We provide free legal advice to people living in North East Victoria and the Southern Riverina of NSW over a catchment of 17 local government areas. We aim to help people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable and would not otherwise be able to get legal help.

Upper Murray Family Care

This service is auspiced by UMFC and in 2017-18 received funding from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Victoria Legal Aid, Legal Aid NSW, Department of Justice (Victoria) and the Victorian Legal Services Board Grants Program. ABN 99 081 624 768 Reg No: A5357 ARBN 081 624 768